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municipal recreation bulletin

Ministry of Community and Social Services

Youth and Recreation Branch

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Branch Services

Most people are interested in the part the provincial government — or the municipal government — should play in providing recreational opportunities for citizens and special services for youth. Any policy or practice established by government in the field of recreation must recognize that:

(a)
a person's leisure is his own and he may choose what he will do with it
(b)
groups organized for recreational purposes should reflect the wishes of the members, and not be subject to any outside authority that regiments or controls the group's actions and goals
(c)
government agencies should aim at extending opportunities for recreation and developing innovative programs with a minimum of control over each individual activity.

These simple stipulations are vital. History teaches some bitter lessons about what can happen when a government exercises even a benevolent control over personal matters that are logically the product of free initiative, personal effort, and the creative imagination of individuals. In its relations with municipalities, and with voluntary groups, the Youth and Recreation Branch tries to assist, to advise and to enable those responsible for the development of recreation opportunities in the community without interfering with the self-determination of the initiators.

Branch Objectives

The Youth and Recreation Branch has established six objectives in its work of serving Ontario communities:

1
Improved recreation services — to develop and expand communication and action within and among interest groups, recreation authorities and school authorities

2
Youth services — to provide services and resources to help young people to develop their own community projects

3
Volunteer leader education — to assist community groups and organizations to increase their effectiveness by providing training for their volunteer leaders

4
Professional development — to advise professionals who provide services in education, recreation and related community services about ways of increasing their own effectiveness

5
Community organization — to assist in the development of community resources at all levels through expansion and stimulation of organizations and services

6
Information services — to make available through many media and services, information that will provide resources for groups and organizations and publicize the services of the Branch.

Field Services

Five regional assistant superintendents coordinate Branch programs in the field. Seventeen consultants are located in the ten regional offices of the Department throughout the province.

What does the Branch expect of the field staff? The consultant is responsible for the services of the Branch as they apply to the municipalities in his or her district, and these responsibilities require that he

- know each community and its recreational development
- be acquainted with recreation leaders and voluntary agencies in the area
- appreciate their problems and the contributions each makes to the community
- understand modern recreation theories and techniques in order to provide information to community agencies
- know the legislation and statutes relating to recreation
- appreciate local situations and problems related to recreation development in the municipality
- understand the underlying purposes of training leaders for leisure programs and be able to give practical guidance
- be committed to the use of the community development process in organizing local resources
- maintain a list of qualified and experienced leaders whom he can recommend to interested groups of people seeking instructors or leaders.

The special advisory services of the Branch are channeled to the communities, organizations and groups by the consultant.

In addition, the Branch depends on the consultant to report objectively on municipal expenditures for recreation programs on which the annual legislative grants are based.

The consultant reports on the nature and extent of the recreation program in the municipality. Annually he assesses the local leadership and any significant changes over the year. If he is satisfied the municipality is contributing to local recreation, he confirms this on the financial report and application for grants submitted by the municipality.

The assistant superintendents observe the work of the municipal recreation employees and with the advice of the consultant and the local employer recommend the issuing of permanent certificates.

Recreation Opportunities for All

Municipalities communicate with the Youth and Recreation Branch and apply for Branch services through the consultants in the regional offices.

The services of the Branch are designed to assist the municipalities to extend recreation opportunities for all the men, women and children of the community. The municipal authority may turn to the consultant for:

- information about the statutes and regulations affecting municipal recreation
- advice related to the provision of recreation services and programs, the development of community programs to involve citizens in planning and defining the role of the municipal government in recreation
- assistance in selecting and developing leaders through courses operated by local agencies or those conducted on a provincial level
- practical advice and help for specific activities (brochures and manuals are available from the Branch for many recreational activities)
- assistance in developing cooperative action with other municipalities
- technical advice about the design and staffing of local courses, seminars, workshops, conferences, surveys, or studies
- resources provided by the Branch (for example, these bulletins come to you from the regional office)
- counselling, advice and information related to any problems that may arise in developing local recreation.

The Specialist Staff

Each of the special consultants employed in the head office is a specialist in a particular aspect of recreation. Each is selected on the basis of his training, skill and experience in some field of cultural recreation activities, leadership training, physical recreation programs or youth services. They provide specific services designed to support special activities provincially and back up the field consultants in regional or local undertakings.

The special consultants must be aware of current trends and developments in their particular fields. The Branch depends on these people for:

- information about developments in the activity throughout the whole province
- recommendations for future planning to encourage development of the activity
- plans for cooperative action with provincial interest groups
- resources related to the specialty
- cooperative work with the field staff on special projects
- comprehensive knowledge of leaders and instructors in the special field throughout the province
- development of appropriate provincial training projects
- services to community special-interest groups developing a particular activity.

Programs

The Youth and Recreation Branch represents the major source of government support for services to sports programs in Ontario. Provincial sports-governing bodies are assisted to improve the quality of their leadership through clinics for coaches, managers and officials. They are also helped to recruit and train new leaders as programs expand, and to develop province-wide programs through the Branch's support of their planning meetings.

Sport Ontario is a federation of the province's 54 sports-governing bodies for which it provides administrative and communication services.

The sports-governing body for each sport is responsible for providing leadership training courses in the sport throughout the province and a community group needing this kind of assistance applies to the provincial organization.

Most people take part in sport for the sake of the enjoyment it gives them. A few choose to concentrate on a particular activity in order to achieve a high level of skill. The sports organizations are assisted to develop levels of competition for those with the ability and motivation to excel.

The Branch helps to select the teams that represent Ontario at national and international competitions, and is also the link between Ontario's sports programs and those of the other Canadian provinces.

The Youth and Recreation Branch plays a part in the development of national fitness and amateur sport across Canada through its relationship to the Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate of the federal Department of National Health and Welfare.

Other Services

In addition to the services and programs already described, the Branch is active in several other fields.

- **Recreation Courses and Certification**
  The Universities of Waterloo and Ottawa offer full-time courses leading to a degree in recreation. Conestoga College, in cooperation with the Branch, offers a one-year certificate course in recreation for university graduates who wish to work as recreation directors.

  Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology located in Toronto, Hamilton, Kitchener, London, Peterborough, Ottawa, North Bay and Thunder Bay offer two-year diploma courses in recreation for students with a minimum of grade 12 standing who wish to work as program supervisors or recreation assistants.
- **The Leadership Development Program**
  Those who are instructing in recrea-

tional skills, those who wish to instruct and those who hold office in group or community organizations and want to learn organization leadership skills, program planning, handling meetings, and speaking effectively are selected for this program.

Local and area courses are offered by school boards, recreation authorities, and colleges of applied arts and technology and provide the basic skill-training in many recreation endeavours. Special courses including both advanced skill-training and leadership skills are offered on a regional basis by colleges of applied arts and technology.

The provincial institute training programs leading to a provincial certificate is offered by the Branch. This program requires a week of residential training annually for three years and the pre-requisite for admission is the completion of elementary, intermediate and advanced training in the specific skill plus the attendance at training courses in community organizations, group work and other leadership subjects.

- **Resource Centre**
  The Branch produces printed resource material for use in recreation programs and in leadership training. There is a series for community organizations, another for training playground leaders. Sports coaching and children's play programs are the subject matter of others.

  This series of bulletins and several brochures and manuals deal with aspects of municipal recreation and professional training. Handbooks for leaders in art and crafts, programs for special groups and bulletins on youth activities are also available.

  A small collection of films on recreation activities, community development and organization leadership is maintained for lending to responsible groups.

  A library of books on community development, informal education, sports, group dynamics, recreation theory and facilities, special skills, theatre, art and crafts, is located at headquarters but may be borrowed through the consultants in the regional offices.

  Choral and small orchestral groups may borrow music from the resource centre and a large collection of plays is available for reading and selection (not for production).

- **Conferences**
  In addition to the specific services that the Branch is able to provide for municipal recreation leaders, the staff participates in many special projects that have the object of increasing public acceptance of organized leisure programs, formulating long-range plans, or of substantiating the need for particular programs. Often these projects take the form of provincial or regional conferences to which representatives of many groups are invited in order to study and make recommendations upon which the Branch, as well as other agencies that might be involved, can base future policy.

History

The present Youth and Recreation Branch came into being in 1968 when the Minister of Education announced that the functions of the Community Programs Section and those of the Youth Branch of the Department were to be combined under one administration. His statement to the Ontario Legislative Assembly began with these words:

> The government recognizes that automation, specialization, shorter work weeks, labour saving devices, job obsolescence, long life spans and a host of other factors are enabling us to have more free or uncommitted time than ever before in the history of mankind. The use that is made of this time concerns us all and it is essential that adequate opportunities for enjoyable and satisfying use of this leisure be available to those who wish to participate.
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> In order to provide the maximum assistance and support for this development, the Community Programs Section and the Youth Branch of my Department will be amalgamated. Community Programs has for 20 years given service to leisure programs through the provision of advice, resources, programs of leadership training and legislative grants on municipal recreation programs.
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> The Youth Branch, since its inception four years ago has been heavily committed to research relating to youth and these findings will be useful in the development of the new Branch.

In April 1972, the Youth and Recreation Branch became part of the new ministry of Community and Social Services of the Ontario Government.